



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON
EDUCATION SERVICE



Prayer and Liturgy Policy

This prayer and liturgy policy has been approved and adopted by the governing body in January 2025 and will be reviewed in January 2026.

Signed by the Chair of Governors:

Signed by the Headteacher:

Our Mission Statement:

To accept each individual as they are and to enable them to develop their full potential within a Christ-centred, worshipping community in a spirit of love, happiness and understanding

'A Learning Community in Christ'

1. The context of this prayer and liturgy policy

'The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers as an integral part of the learning and teaching should enable the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and should develop a mature spiritual life.' (Marcus Stock (2012), *Christ at the Centre*, Catholic Truth Society, 23.)

2. Statement of requirement

The law requires all maintained Catholic schools to provide an act of daily collective worship (prayer and liturgy) for all pupils, including those in the sixth form (Section 70, 1988 Education Act) that is in accordance with the rites, practices, disciplines, and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, schedule 20; Instrument of Government, clause 2). Academies in England are required by their funding agreement and Articles of Association to comply with similar requirements (*The Mainstream Academy and Free School: Supplemental Funding Agreement*, December 2020; *Model Articles for Catholic Academies*, February 2019).

The law requires all maintained schools to recognise and respect that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children up to the age of 16 from prayer and liturgy (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.71(1A)).

Sixth-form pupils can choose to withdraw themselves from prayer and liturgy (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.71(1B)). The school's provision for prayer and liturgy will fulfil pupils' entitlement to experience the range of liturgical treasures of the Church, including a shared repertoire of prayers and liturgical music with which pupils in the school will be familiar.

Prayer and liturgy are not designated curriculum time. In the context of the Catholic school, this means that times of prayer and liturgy are not considered to be part of the allocation of curriculum time for Religious Education.

3. Responsibility

(a) Governance

The governors, as guardians of the Catholic school's life and mission, have a responsibility to ensure that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- there is a named person(s) who is responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school (the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator)
- the prayer and liturgy policy is updated regularly and shared with all stakeholders
- there is a budget for prayer and liturgy that reflects its centrality to the life of a Catholic school.

(b) Headteacher

The Headteacher, as the spiritual leader of the school as a Catholic community, ensures that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line

with the guidance set out by the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*

- they work in partnership with the leader(s) for prayer and liturgy
- those responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school have been given appropriate training and formation to ensure that all guidance is followed and adhered to
- there are suitable resources for prayer and liturgy in the school.

(c) Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator

Those responsible for prayer and liturgy ensure that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- there is an Annual Plan of Provision for prayer and liturgy across the school year which identifies liturgical seasons and key celebrations, as well as opportunities for the celebration of the Sacraments
- there is daily planned prayer for all pupils, appropriate to age and ability, as outlined in the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- pupils are supported in their liturgical formation to take an active role in the planning, preparation, and delivery of prayer and liturgy according to their age and capacity, and in a manner which facilitates their progressive participation
- resources to support the planning of prayer and liturgy are appropriate and readily available to staff and pupils
- induction on prayer and liturgy takes place for new members of staff as required
- staff have access to effective training and formation opportunities
- monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy take place regularly and feed back into planning for future liturgies
- monitoring of prayer and liturgy is reported to the Headteacher and governing body to support whole-school development and the Catholic life of the school
- there is collaboration with local clergy and parishes
- liaison with the Diocesan Education Service and others is maintained to ensure they keep updated with best practice.

4. Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

The Planning, Content and Delivery of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, 'To know you more clearly' Religious Education Directory, programme, feast days, significant dates and the curriculum. Scripture will often be the focus in acts of worship and a variety of prayer styles will be used appropriate to the age of the children and the occasion.

Acts of worship will develop in pupils' skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship in a meaningful way.

Parents and parishioners are invited to participate in some celebrations.

Each week class, key stage and whole school worship are timetabled. In a typical week, this will be:

Monday: Celebration assembly. We start the week with 'Time to Shine' where we celebrate the gift, talents and qualities of individuals from each class, as identified by the other children and their adults. We also celebrate where children have worked hard in their learning as part of being our 'learning community in Christ.' As we introduce the 'Outdoor Learning and Play' (OPAL) programme, we will also celebrate the positive behaviours seen at playtimes, linking these to the Gospel values.

Tuesday: Hymn Practice. We gather together as a school to sing hymns that link to the themes of the liturgical year and in preparation for the celebration of the Eucharist in school. We reflect on the meaning of the words of the hymns and why they are important to us. We use hymns with actions as well as words to invite greater participation from all of the children.

Wednesday: House assemblies / 'SALT' (Social Awareness and Liturgy Team) assemblies. The children are led by house captains or the SALT team to reflect on school, local or world issues, to consider how these relate to the teachings of Jesus and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, and how we can put our faith into action by responding to them.

Thursday: Class worship. This will adapt to the needs and stage of the children, and is a further opportunity to explore the 'celebrate' lens of each branch within the Religious Education Directory. Staff also have access to the Magister resources, which are a source of support in helping the pupils to plan a liturgy based on the four-part act of worship. They will have a bank of resources to draw upon and opportunities to create their own.

Friday: Gospel assembly. The whole school gathers to listen to the Gospel that will be read in the coming Sunday's Mass. We reflect on the important parts for us, what it reveals about God's love for us, and how the words of the Gospel can shape our lives in the coming week.

The Format for Collective Worship in our school will be:

Gather – how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet reflective music, lighted candles, icons etc.)

Listen – liturgies will normally centre around a text from the Bible; the Word of God will be proclaimed from a bible or lectionary, or it may be presented in words or pictures on a whiteboard screen to increase its accessibility to all

Respond – The response to the Word may lead into a time of ritual action or communal prayer. The ritual action may vary (dance, music, drama, art, poetry etc.) We place our needs before God (intercessory prayers)

Go Forth – Giving the children something to hold on to from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives.

Recording

Collective Worship may be recorded in the following ways:

- on a liturgy planner to keep a note of themes, leaders and resources
- through displays, reflections, photographs, prayers, leaflets, powerpoints, class spiritual journals etc
- through pupil response/in discussion or written comments

Everyone is invited to take part in communal prayer, for example in classes at the beginning and end of each day, or at the beginning of meetings. Prayer can be led either by staff or children, with appropriate formation. Children of other faiths are invited to participate respectfully as far as their own faith permits them. All children are expected to maintain a respectful presence at times of prayer.

Each class has a Class Worship Box which contains a collection of drapes in seasonal liturgical colours, candles, crucifixes, statues, rosaries, icons, prayer pebbles etc. Copies of the relevant RED

and bibles are also available in each classroom. Additional resources are housed in the RE resources in the Hub and under the prayer table in the hall.

Focal points in each classroom and throughout the school will reflect the liturgical season and will reference RED branches. In this way they will be an outward sign of the school's ethos.

Class prayer tables will always feature a bible and a candle. There should also be a crucifix in all classrooms.

Children are given the opportunity to pray together throughout the day in their classrooms. These opportunities are:

- Start of the day prayer
- Lunchtime prayer
- End of the day prayer

Other prayers that the children learn and may pray together in class or during wider gatherings are 'The Our Father', 'Hail Mary' (particularly during the months of May and October), 'Glory Be' and prayers written by the children.

5. Our school context

Within our school, not all members of our school community are Catholic or have any Christian or wider faith background. We are therefore mindful of ensuring that prayer and liturgy in our school is inclusive for all, whilst reflecting the requirements of the Prayer and Liturgy Directory.

English Martyrs Catholic Primary School serves two parishes – English Martyrs in Goring and St. Michael's in High Salvington – and this means that we are blessed to have two parish priests who support the children and the school in their prayer and liturgy and who come in to celebrate Mass and to enable children to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Mass

Our intention is to include everyone to participate with us in prayerful silence, joyful sung praise and in listening to the Word of God. We seek to make our actions prayerful and deliberate so that they can be recognised by the youngest children in our school community. All members of our community are invited to receive a blessing from the priest.

During Mass, readings will be taken from *Universalis* where possible and appropriate; otherwise readings for the theme of the Mass will be drawn from the children's RE learning (in accordance with the RE Directory) and appropriate to the liturgical calendar.

At Holy Communion, all members of our community are invited to receive a blessing from the priest. Children in YR to Y3 will stand and be invited to have a blessing from the priest, indicated by placing their arms across their chest. After accepting the blessing, children are encouraged to make the Sign of the Cross.

All children in Y4-6 will come forward to the priests or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. All children are invited to approach the priest either with their arms placed across their chest to receive a blessing or in readiness to receive Holy Communion (if they have completed the First Holy

Communion preparation in their Catholic parish). Class teachers will support and remind children of this process before each Mass.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

All children are invited to come forward to a priest for a blessing, whether or not they have been prepared to receive the sacrament. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available to all children who have made their first reconciliation after a period of preparation in their Catholic parish.

Music

“Music is integral to liturgy and celebrations of the word...Music highlights or gives prominence to the part of the liturgy where it is used. Therefore, the use of music matches the high points of the liturgy”. (PLD 6.2)

All children are invited to participate fully in leading music during Mass, either through playing instruments, leading actions or singing.

Music should be chosen to ensure that the text and the music fit the context of the liturgy.

All music and hymns should reflect Catholic teaching and understanding of faith.

Secular music where the text is consistent with Catholic teaching may be used in some forms of prayer assemblies.

6. Resourcing

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school’s understanding of itself as a Catholic school, and this is reflected in the annual budget allocation and available resources, including staff time, chaplaincy provision, and dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy. The Catholic character of the school is reflected in religious artefacts and images on display throughout the building. Dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy will be furnished and maintained as such, and updated to reflect the Church’s liturgical season. Staff training and formation costs will be funded separately to ensure that all staff are able to fulfil their responsibility to contribute to the prayer and liturgical life of the school.

7. Training and formation

All new staff will be supported during induction and beyond, so that they fully understand the responsibility they carry within their individual role for leading prayer and liturgy in the school. Any individual training needs will be identified and addressed through training and formation. There will also be the opportunity for whole-staff professional development at least once a year, so that all staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy and relevant staff are well supported to lead as required.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy will take place regularly, and at least annually, and involve all key stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff, clergy, and governors. Areas for development will be identified and issues raised will be actioned and evidenced as appropriate.

9. Review

The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of policy review conducted by the governors.